

UNIFORMED PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION OF CONNECTICUT

AFFILIATED WITH INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS

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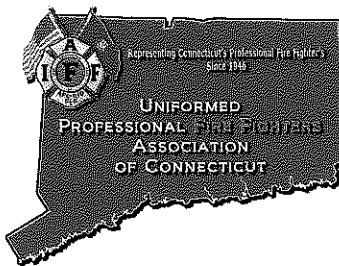
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PAUL J. RAPANAULT

DIRECTOR

Legislative/Political Affairs

March 14, 2014

Good afternoon Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and members of the Public Health Committee. My name is Paul Rapanault. I am the Director of Legislation/Political Affairs of the Uniformed Professional Fire Fighters of Connecticut. The UPFFA represents 4,000 career fire fighters, Emergency Medical Technicians and dispatchers in nearly 60 municipal and state local unions.

I am here today to speak in **OPPOSITION** to House Bill No. 5503, **AN ACT CONCERNING EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FOR CERTAIN STATE FACILITIES.**

There are 19 full time members of the University of Connecticut Health Center's fire department. These firefighters are responsible for fire and rescue operations for the Health Center in addition to providing paramedic service to four surrounding towns in the Farmington Valley, emergency medical service on UCHC's main campus and response to fire and EMS calls to six additional off campus locations.

An extensive construction program on campus, including new buildings, do not yet have permanent fire protection systems and add over 3 million additional square feet in total coverage area. After a 2013 reduction in fire fighter manpower on the evening shift from 5 to 4 fire fighters and currently providing only a 2-person paramedic requirement, it seems unconscionable and naïve to believe that an already overtaxed department can meet an additional workload without additional personnel assets.

Fire Fighters of the UCONN Health Center are highly trained professionals who take their duties and responsibilities very seriously. They support this bill in concept but seriously doubt the long term effect on fire fighters and the people they have pledged to serve.

Without a commitment to provide the additional manpower and equipment to properly staff such a significant increase in services, the UPFFA cannot support this legislation and put more responsibility on an already understaffed department.

Thank you for your consideration.

Paul J Rapanault, Legislative/Political Affairs